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PATRONAGE IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

THE subject of *church patronage* in the Scottish Establishment, occupies at present much of the public mind. As many of our readers may not be aware of the nature and extent of the evil, we think it necessary to furnish some account of its origin, and of the bitter fruits which have sprung from it. We shall now glance at the present state of the Scottish Church in relation to this grievance.

"The right of patronage, according to *Streinius's Summa Juris Canonici*," as quoted in *Pardovan's Collections*, is a power to present a fit person to a vacant church benefice, which right is acquired several ways; as, 1. when one gifts land to build a church upon; 2. if, with the consent of the bishop, one build a church; 3. if one bestows upon a church, or mortifies, to those serving the cure thereat, some considerable maintenance; 4. an immemorial custom of presenting; 5. by a privilege and gift thereto, derived from the Pope.

An inspection of this quotation, interspersed as it is with the terms, Bishop, Cure, Pope, &c. will conduct the intelligent reader to the discovery, that patronage existed in the *Church of Rome* before it found its way into the *Church of Scotland*. We mean not to insinuate that the fact of its having been borrowed from Popery is a sufficient cause why every enlightened Christian should stamp it with indignant reprobation, unless any choose to understand by Popery that part of the Romish system which is at variance with the word of God. But we must view it as one of the many corruptions by which Rome marred the purity and simplicity of our holy religion—one of the stratagems which she employed in rivetting her tyrannical yoke on the neck of Christendom. It is shown by Mosheim, that the Christians were indebted for patronage to the practices of heathen idolatry, the prolific source of many of the rites and ceremonies which human wisdom superadded to divine revelation. That eminent ecclesiastical historian, in his account of the rites

and ceremonies of the Church in the fourth century, observed "That at this time it was looked upon as an essential part of religion to have, in every country, a multitude of *churches* and here we must look for the true origin of what is called the *right of patronage*, which was introduced among Christians with no other view than to encourage the opulent to erect a great number of *churches*, by giving them the privilege of appointing the ministers that were to officiate in them. This was a new instance of that servile imitation of the *ancient superstitions* which reigned at this time; for it was a very common notion among the people of old, that nations and provinces were happy and free from danger in proportion to the number of fanes and temples which they consecrated to the worship of *gods* and *heroes*, whose protection and succour could not fail, as it was thought, to be shed abundantly on those who worshipped them with such zeal, and honoured them with so many marks of veneration and respect. The christians, unhappily contracted the same erroneous way of thinking."—*Mosheim*, vol. 1., page 394; Berwick edition.

Such is the origin of patronage; a right invented by the policy of heathenism; adopted into the infringements of Popery on the liberties of the people; and, at the present moment (*proh pudor!*) maintained in vigorous operation in the reformed ecclesiastical establishment of Scotland. Strange that free-born Presbyterians are guilty of submitting to the tyranny of patronage; and that, without a struggle, they allow (as in many instances) persons of a totally different communion, to invade their sacred and inalienable right of choosing their own pastors. If they are content in such a state of bondage, we say that their very contentment is unscriptural and unreasonable and evinces the degrading influence of the system; just as the contentment of the slave in his brutalized state is one of the darkest horrors of slavery. That the word of God, and right reason, and the practice of the primitive churches, all combine in vindicating the right of the people to choose their ministers we fearlessly assert: if the truth of the assertion be questioned we shall endeavour to furnish the proof.

At the glorious era of the Reformation in Scotland, the grievance of patronage was sufficiently known and estimated. The men who nobly led the way in abolishing superstition, and maintaining in its purity and spirituality the worship of God were not slow in recognizing the rights and privileges of the christian people. In the first Book of Discipline, which was presented to the nobility in the year 1560, and afterwards sub

ed by the Kirk and Lords, it is expressly stated that pertaineth to the people, and to every several congregation, elect their minister." The second Book of Discipline, read on in the General Assembly of 1578, is still more explicit on the subject, as will appear from the following extract: "The liberty of the election of persons called to the ecclesiastical functions, and observed without interruption, so long as the Kirk was not corrupted by Anti-Christ, we desire to be restored and retained within this realm; so that none be set in upon any congregation, either by the prince or any other person, without lawful election, and the assent of the people over whom the person is placed; as the practice of the apostolical and Primitive Kirk, and good order, crave. And because this order, which God's word craves, *cannot stand in patronages and presentation* to benefices, used in the Reformation's Kirk, we desire all them that truly fear God, earnestly consider that, inasmuch as the names of patronages and benefices, together with the effect thereof, have *flowed from the source*, and corruption of the canon law *only*, they ought not to have place in this light of reformation."

The book containing these sentiments has been repeatedly ratified by acts of Assembly; and repeated applications, on the part of the Church of Scotland, have been made to the legislature for the abolition of the grievance of patronage. We may, indeed, assert, in the language of a powerful and eloquent writer, that, "if there is one principle which the church of Scotland has decidedly avowed, it is, that patronage is an unnatural incumbrance, and inconsistent with the free exercise of Presbyterian polity; if there is one measure which she has sanctioned by her example, and fortified with precedents, it is that of applying to the Legislature to be relieved from the bondage of patronage." Nor did the supporters of the Reformation in Scotland abate their contentings till patronage was abolished by act of Parliament. The act removing this grievance, as Wedrow styles it, passed in 1649. In the preamble it is stated, that "patronages and presentations are an evil and bondage, under which the Lord's people and ministers of this land have long groaned, and that it hath no warrant in God's word, but is founded only on the common law, and is a *popish custom*, and brought into the Kirk in time of ignorance and superstition; and that it is contrary to the second Book of Discipline, in which, upon solid and good ground, it is reckoned among the abuses that are desired to be reformed." At the Restoration, the curse of patronage was again in-

flicted on the Church of Scotland, accompanied by episcopacy. This unhappy state of things was changed at the Revolution when, by one act of Parliament, the evil was considerably alleviated, and, by a subsequent act of the same Parliament, removed. In 1712, however, patronage was again disgracefully restored by a grasping High-church administration. Having ascertained that the obnoxious measure was pending, the Assembly's commission dispatched Messrs. Blackwell, Carstairs and Baillie, as a deputation to London, to present before the Lords a strong remonstrance against the contemplated invasion of the privileges of the Church; and at their next meeting the Assembly approved of their conduct, and declared the remonstrance to be "*most faithful and seasonable.*" Such, indeed, was the anxiety to procure a repeal of this enactment in 1712, that a standing order remained on the books of the Assembly till 1784, requiring the Commission to embrace an opportunity which might offer of petitioning against it. At the latter date the order was struck off, on a motion to that effect, and no longer constituted part of the instructions given to the Commission. We must, therefore, regard the Church of Scotland as having contentedly sat down under that which, in her earlier and better days, she declared to be *a grievance and a burden.*

As a specimen of the bitter fruits of patronage, we shall merely furnish the following instances of "violent settlements" from the testimony of the Associate Synod, published 1804:—

"The right of the Christian people to choose their own pastor, the vindication of which was one special cause of the Secession, has been uniformly, and in many instances in a more daring manner, trampled upon by the Established Judicatories, since that Secession took place. An active concurrence in violent settlements has, in different cases, been made a term of ministerial communion. Thus the Assembly, having in 1750, appointed the Presbytery of Linlithgow, to proceed with a violent settlement in the parish of Torphichen, they neglected to fulfil the appointment, declaring that, 'they have no freedom in their consciences to do so.' The following Assembly rebuked them for disobedience; renewed the appointment; and, in case they should still prove refractory, appointed a committee to proceed through with the business.

"In the year 1752, the Presbytery of Dunfermline was appointed to meet at Inverkeithing, during the time of the Assembly's sitting, to carry through a violent settlement in that parish. Every member of the Presbytery was enjoined, under pain of censure, to attend, and to appear before the Assembly the day succeeding that of the settlement, to give an account of their diligence, or to answer for their disobedience. The greater part of the members of Presbytery, having

edom, did not attend; and thus the settlement did not take place. The day following, the Assembly called them to an account, and one member of Presbytery, viz., Mr. Thomas Gillespie, was deposed, and others were laid under a provisional suspension from the exercise of their office in judicatories, in case of their not countenancing the settlement on a future day.

In the same spirit, do we find them conducting themselves, in 1763, with regard to some members of the Presbytery of Tain. A main minister having received a presentation to the parish of Nigg, the people had unanimously opposed his settlement, for a series of years. The Presbytery having, however, in the face of all opposition, appointed the settlement, came to the place; but not a person belonging to the parish was present. At length, one man appeared, who, after having told them, that if they should proceed, the blood of the parish of Nigg would be required at their hands, went off. Some members were still for proceeding; but others thought it was time to stop, and the settlement did not take place. For this the Presbytery was rebuked by the Assembly, and enjoined to go through with the business, at all hazards."

We have inserted these melancholy instances of trampling on the rights of the people, in order to show that great evils have resulted from patronage. We could furnish others; but our argument rests not on the fact, that "violent settlements" have taken place, much less on the number of such settlements. We attack the principle. The whole system of patronage, as it is maintained in the church of Scotland, we denounce as unscriptural, and as a system of awful sporting with men's eternal interests.

What is the present state of this grievance? The establishment of Scotland has about 944 livings; of these we find, in the patronage of individuals, 582; of the crown, 274; of town councils, 62; of the heritors, 13; of universities and societies, 2; of kirk sessions, 2; of heads of families, 2; of congregations, 1. Here are upwards of *nine hundred* congregations in connexion with the Established Church of Scotland, and only one of them all possesses the right of choosing its own minister! *One out of nine hundred!!* Will the people of Scotland continue to hug their chains, and yield a dastardly submission to such grinding ecclesiastical oppression? Will they not, as the descendants of the men who ably and successfully contended against this remnant of "the ancient superstitions," stand forward and assert the rights and privileges which they have been so long deprived by the unholy hand of legalized spoliation? Will not the genius of a country, whose soil has been fattened with blood, shed in defence of civil and religious liberty, rise up in his strength, and rescue sons and daughters from the "*bondage and grievance*" of patronage? If not, we call on the statesmen whose praisewor-

thy efforts are devoted to the emancipation of the West Indian slave, to pass a law, guaranteeing *christian* freedom to the injured and enthralled people of the Church of Scotland. It is true, this would be a sacrifice on the part of our Government, as there are 274 livings in the gift of the crown; but, if they are the *genuine* and not the *spurious* friends of liberty, they will not hesitate to make that sacrifice. No man was ever the poorer for the offering which he presented at the shrine of christian liberty. Before passing to another point, we again request our readers to bear in mind the fact, that of more than *nine hundred* congregations belonging to the Established Church of Scotland, only *one* has the right of choosing its own minister!

But the darkest feature is yet to be inspected. Time was when no man would have pretended to advocate the right of patronage: it has several defenders *now*, and not a few admirers! Some writers, in their puny endeavours to support it, speak of the "voice of the people in the election of ministers." We presume by the people they mean the *one* congregation which alone has a "voice." The constitution of the Scottish Establishment we admit, provides for a call being presented to the pastor, but this is mere matter of form; for (to use the language of the late Dr. Hill, Professor of Theology in St. Andrew's) "the Church Courts have shown by the train of their decisions during the greater part of the last century, that they do not consider themselves as warranted by law to refuse admission to a presentee upon account of *any deficiency* in the subscriptions to his call." The same Reverend Doctor informs us that "the idea of a right in the people to elect a person to be presented to the Presbytery, that in consequence of that election he may by them be ordained and admitted, is *inconsistent with the nature of the religious establishment of this country*," viz., Scotland. We hope, for the honour of the Scottish Church, that this statement is calumnious. Does the Doctor mean to assert that "popular election" is *inconsistent* with the nature of the establishment, whilst it is perfectly *consistent* with its nature to retain what the Knoxes, and Melvilles, and Bruces, and Calderwoods, and all the Reforming Fathers, declared to be "a bondage and grievance," a "popish custom," unlawful and unwarrantable by God's word, and contrary to the doctrines and liberties of this Kirk?" If this is his meaning, we wonder not that the "Sectaries," as Doctor Chalmers contemptuously styles the Secession, Relief, Reformed Presbyterian, and other churches, have so rapidly increased, and are every day gaining fresh accessions in Scotland.

In vindication of the right of patronage, it is further asserted, that as the presentee must be a man who obtains licence to preach the gospel under the sanction of the Church, the patron necessarily confers the living on a person of sufficient qualifications. Now, passing by the fact that this argument is equally valid on the side of popular election, we adopt the reply given to a similar argument urged by Cardinal Bellarmine, the great champion of the Roman Catholics, as quoted with approbation in an able pamphlet lately published. "Congregations," observes the talented opponent of Bellarmine, "judge not simply and absolutely whether one be fit for the ministry, but whether he be fit to serve in the ministry *among them*; which two are so different that, of two men offered to the congregation, he that is absolutely and simply the best qualified for the ministry, is not for that cause alone to be admitted, but he who is fittest for that congregation. Now a rude and ignorant people can judge which of the two speaks best to their capacity and edification."

At a late meeting of the General Assembly, the question of patronage was warmly debated, and a resolution adopted which ought to immortalize the large majority by whom it was carried. The resolution is the following—"It is the opinion of this Assembly, after the proceedings that have lately taken place in regard to the question of calls, that it is unnecessary and inexpedient to adopt at present any farther proceedings in reference to patronage." Thus the General Assembly of 1833 has decided, that, for the present, patronage is "to be let alone;" and this at the time when an official document is laid before them, signed by 56,000 of their own people, petitioning Parliament for the repeal of the law of patronage! We are tempted to surmise, that the "grievance" must have undergone some wonderful transformation, which has recommended it to the Reverend body, by whose forefathers it was denounced and strenuously opposed. What saith the testimony of Dr. M'Gill, as it appears in the public prints? "The Assembly must keep in mind," he states in his speech, "that patronage is different now from what it was at the beginning. Then the patron was the first person in the parish; he built the church, paid the minister, and endowed him. It is very different now, when a patron may *sell his right for a sum of money* when he chooses. He may exercise the right, without having an inch of ground in the parish—without paying a farthing to the minister, or the church—without having the slightest interest in it. *He may be a profligate in morals, and a profligate*

in principle. Such is the present state of patronage." A yet the General Assembly by a sweeping majority decided that it is inexpedient, at present, to adopt any means with view of removing this gigantic and intolerable abuse! So are indignant at this base truckling to the Simoniacal interest of the patrons—some are rejoicing, and others wondering the infatuation of the Assembly. For ourselves, while pity the *laity* whose dearest rights have been long bartered and themselves held in a state of grievous vassalage, we rejoice to hope that the time is not far distant, when, animated by the spirit of their fathers, they shall vindicate their christian privileges, and stand in the attitude of *Christian Freemen*. Then shall the congregations of the faithful look to their ministers as the men of their choice, and of their prayer then shall peace be within the walls of Zion, and we shall hear no more of "violent settlements;" and then the spirit of brotherly kindness, and the liberty of the gospel shall be supplied with new facilities of extending their influence, and enriching, with their heavenly treasures, the hearts of the followers of the Redeemer. D.

MISSIONS IN TRAVANCORE.

To the Editors of the Christian Freeman.

GENTLEMEN,—I shall feel obliged by your inserting the following statements in reference to the progress of the gospel in Travancore.

In the Nagercoil branch of this Mission, no fewer than *one hundred and thirteen families* renounced heathenism, and professed christianity, in the last six months of the year 1837 while, at the same time, sixteen hundred and forty-three pupils were receiving instruction in the schools. The more recent history of the Mission has been such as these cheering facts would have led us to expect. By means of the ravages of cholera, combined with the devoted and persevering labours of the missionaries and native teachers, a spirit of inquiry has been widely diffused, and churches and schools have been multiplied. According to the latest intelligence, *the whole district of country, thirty miles in length, and twenty breadth*, "is, in a measure, laid under the influence of the gospel." "In more than forty different towns and villages, the worship of the true and living God is maintained by those who have embraced the faith of Christ." And "in the school

h are situated in *forty-six* different places, there are about *thousand* children instructed in the doctrines of the *el.*"

the Neyoor branch of the Travancore Mission, the *pphs* of the cross have been still more glorious and cheer-

Upwards of *three thousand* have renounced idolatry, and *are forty-three* congregations, composed of about *seven hundred native families*, residing in nearly *fifty different* *ages*, under the inspection of one missionary, assisted by a *erintendent* of schools and a number of devoted native *pers.* In the year 1831 alone, *one hundred and sixty* *filies*, containing about *seven hundred individuals*, gave *he* worship of the evil spirits; in two places, the houses *oted* to the devil, where persons supposing themselves in- *ed* by Satan, exhibited scenes of wild and frantic fury, *e* converted into christian houses of prayer. Several idols, *other* objects of heathenish veneration, were delivered up, *an* altar was marked for destruction, and would have been *antly* demolished had not the day been the Sabbath. *ring* the first half of the year 1832, the glorious work con- *ed* to advance. At one village, *eleven families*, consisting *nearly fifty individuals*, renounced idolatry; a temple of *an* was enlarged and employed in the service of God; and *images* were given up, one of which was destroyed, and *other* deposited in the museum of the London Missionary *ciety.* At another village, *seven families*, containing *ty-seven persons*, professed christianity, and, like the con- *ts* in many other places, destroyed their pagodas. At a *rd*, a new congregation was formed, consisting of between *y* and fifty individuals, who assemble in a meeting-house *cted* beside the ruins of a temple of Satan; and, at a fourth, *ty* persons embraced christianity, and an altar thirty-five feet *h* was demolished.

“What hath the Lord wrought!” “This is the Lord’s *ng*; it is marvellous in our eyes.”—Yours in love, M.

ANTIQUITY OF THE FREQUENT OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER.

(Continued from page 277 of our last.)

STEWART, in his Collections, states, that in the early period *the* Reformation in Scotland, *monthly* communion prevailed. *the* first book of discipline, framed in 1560, four times a-

year were appointed, with an intimation that the Supper might be dispensed oftener.

We venerate the Westminster Assembly. What says the Larger Catechism? Look at Question 177. "The Lord's Supper is to be administered *often*." The proof adduced is "For as often as ye eat," &c. What says the Directory?—It recommends frequent observance of the Lord's Supper; not so frequent, as Mason observes, as to supersede the necessity even of a previous intimation. Let the whole passage be carefully studied. "The Lord's Supper is *frequently* to be observed; but *how* often, may be considered and determined by the *ministers and other church governors*, as they shall find it most *convenient for the comfort and edification* of the people committed to their charge. The ignorant and scandalous are not fit to receive the Lord's Supper. Where the sacrament cannot with convenience be frequently administered, it is requisite that public warning be given the Sabbath day before the administration thereof: and that, either *then*, or on *some other* day of that week, something concerning the ordinance, and the due preparation thereunto, and participation thereof, be taught."

What was the *practice* of the Westminster divines? Mason, giving Erskine as his authority, states, that several of these divines, and a great part of those who were ejected for non-conformity to the Established Church, by the profligate and persecuting Charles the II., are certainly *known* to have celebrated the Lord's Supper once a month in their congregations.

With one additional authority, I conclude. In the reign of James I., the principles of Orthodoxy, and of Presbyterian Church order were established with the Scottish settlers in Ulster, under the ministry of those venerable and holy men Bryce of Broad Island, who settled there, as the first Irish Presbyterian minister, in the year 1611, Bridges of Antrim, Calvert and Hubbard of Carrickfergus, Blair of Bangor, Cunningham of Hollywood, Welsh of Templepatrick, and Livingston of Killinchy. The same evangelical and presbyterian principles, are most surely held and witnessed by the Presbyterian Secession Church, "joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," without any of the Arianism, Socinianism, or Arminianism, of later times. Cunningham of Hollywood, and Blair of Bangor, made such mutual arrangements as enabled them to have each the communion *four* times, and to allow the people to communicate *eight* times in the year.

subjoin a passage from a book entitled, "the Loyalty of the Presbyterians," published in 1713, and written by Kirkpatrick, a prominent minister in Belfast. This passage is worthy the attention of those among us, who have for years been advocating and carrying forward Revival Prayer-meetings, Home Missions, and frequent Communion; and who, not satisfied with remaining against the abominations of Babylon by the fire-side, have gone forth in person, or by their missionaries, and preached the gospel to their Roman Catholic countrymen.

The ministers kept a monthly meeting at Antrim, wherein some of them usually preached in one day, and they commonly met two at these meetings, in preaching and solemn humiliations, by prayer and fasting; and there consulted amongst themselves of the best method for cherishing piety in their several congregations, and for the propagation of it through the whole country, and for the extirpation of Popery; wherein God was pleased to bless them with admirable success in a few years. Every coarse people were brought in by their ministry, not so much to be wonderfully civilized, but by a powerful blessing in the gospel, great numbers of them became serious Christians; and from all parts of the country resorted to these monthly meetings, and to the quarterly communions then in use. For Mr. Blair and Mr. Cunningham soon concerted with themselves to give the sacrament of the Lord's Supper *each of them four times* a year, and adjusted the times of celebration of it, so as the *greatest number* of their parishioners who were *proficients in religion* communicated in their churches, which was *once in six or seven weeks*. And the *other ministers found so great comfort*, and so much assistance in their work, as encouraged them likewise to use *desirable frequency* in the administration of that solemn ordinance. They employed themselves with such indefatigable diligence as to secure the approbation of all the sober and moderate Episcopalians, and particularly of the great Usher, with whom Mr. Blair was well acquainted, and of whom he and his brethren had great applause."

While advocating frequent communion, I am decidedly opposed to promiscuous and lax communion. To admit to the Lord's Table whatever description of characters may choose to come forward—to invite all promiscuously, and leave the matter entirely to themselves, is surely a violation of that discipline which is laid down in the New Testament. It is the business of church officers, and a sacred trust committed to them, to guard the purity of the church. Low and dead is that church, in which

no adequate attention is given to ascertain the knowledge, christian experience, and the soundness of the faith of those who seek admission to communion. To throw open Baptism or the Lord's Supper to men indiscriminately, without regard to their truth, their honesty, their charity, their sobriety, their godliness, is an abomination in the sight of Christ, an insupportable nuisance in the church, a most atrocious butchery, at once of religion, and of souls. The man who is an heretic after first and second admonition, we are commanded to reject. We are forbidden to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers; the wicked person we are directed to put away; and when a church member falls into sin, prompt and appropriate means must first be employed to bring him to repentance, but if that be unsuccessful, he is to be excluded from fellowship. To those who are without, discipline extends not; but within, to any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, or such a one," we are enjoined, "no, not to eat"—not to eat of the ordinary meal; much more, not to eat the Lord's Supper. A credible profession of faith in Christ and obedience to his commands ought to be required in all candidates for church fellowship without respect of persons. Evidence is that alone on which the church is warranted to proceed; to determine the state of the heart with unerring certainty is the prerogative of Jesus Christ: evidence, however, should be required, and as we must give an account at the last, we should be concerned to maintain the faithful exercise of scriptural discipline. "An indiscriminate admission to this ordinance," says the Rev. Dr. Russell, of Dundee, "were therefore in utter opposition to the nature and design, dishonourable to the Saviour, and of the most ruinous tendency to the partakers themselves." "There is no excuse," says M'Leod, in his ecclesiastical catechism, "for those who receive into the church or continue in it, one who is known to live without practical godliness; it is however, the province of man to judge the heart; and the present church may have in its communion unregenerate men." Westminster Larger Catechism, declares, Q. 173, "Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ hath left in his church, until they receive instruction and manifest their reformation." In the Presbyterian Secession Church, Presbyteries, in the visitation of congregations, are directed to put the following question to the Ru-

elders—"Is baptism publickly administered—the Lord's Supper, twice in the year or *oftener* dispensed, and care taken by such examination of parents and young communicants, respecting knowledge, gracious habits and exercise, and by such acquaintance with the spiritual attainments of all, as to admit by the holy, so far as they can be known, to the seals of the covenant?" To commissioners on the part of the church, the following question is also directed to be put—"Are your ministers and Elders faithful to the trust committed to them in visiting the sick—restoring in the spirit of meekness any over-taken in a fault—putting away from among you, as to christian communion in Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the grossly scandalous and wicked for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus?"

It is matter of surprise and regret, that churches in large towns, have not been more alive to the importance of observing the Lord's Supper oftener than they have generally done. Were frequency of communion revived—were the proper distinction made in religious societies between the mere congregation and the church—were Bible discipline enforced, and were ministers, in their public discourses, constantly to maintain that none but genuine, living christians, have a right, to come to the Lord's Table—that communion in the Lord's Supper, is the great act, not of a promiscuous assembly, but of a select society, and that a church of Christ is a number of "faithful" persons, such as appear genuine believers in Christ,—I cannot conceive a more efficient means of reviving our torpid christianity, and drawing down a promised refreshing from the Spirit of God. Why do not the churches in Belfast address themselves to this good work? Their example would excite very many: public sentiment on this head, would in process of time be powerfully influenced and corrected; and though the present is a stiff-necked generation, and likely, in regard to revivals of religion, doomed to die in the wilderness, yet the next generation, more alive to divine things, will, it is fondly hoped, witness, among other indications of the approach of the glory of the latter day, the often observance of the Lord's Supper all over the face of the land. In the apostolic age, the Lord's Supper, we have seen, was frequently administered; and I have no doubt that in the Millennium, when the spirit shall be poured out from on high, and piety and love shall generally prevail, that throughout the churches, the table of the Lord shall often be set before the faithful.

Let ministers and church-members arouse themselves to

serious reflection and prayer, on the subject of *often* commemorating the death of Christ. Let the question be placed on scriptural foundation—let ministers expound it from the pulpit and in their private visits from house to house—let some cheap publication be issued on the subject—let nothing be done in heat or in haste—let there be pains, patience and prayer, and in proportion as attention is drawn to the word of God as the only rule of faith and duty, on this, as well as every other christian institution—in proportion as church members are taught to cherish a spirit of simple and entire submission to the ordinances and commandments of Christ, as Christ gave them, and as Christ left them—in proportion will a desire and a delight *often* to observe the Lord's supper prevail in the church. The revival of frequency of communion will not *force*—warm spirits mark this—but gone about in a good spirit, and by proper means, the time will come when it shall be universal.

As private christians, we should keep this feast as often and as constantly as we have opportunity. The same command—the same sense of gratitude and love to Jesus—the same spiritual advantages which urge us to “do this” once or occasionally urge us to “do this” “as often” as the sacred table is set before us.

In vain, however, is it that the souls of private christians long after more frequent opportunities of commemorating the dying love of Jesus, when churches, as collective bodies, allow themselves to be frozen by formality, or so bound up by the slavery of custom, as only twice in the year at most, to place in the hands of the friends of Jesus, the sacred emblems of his atonement. I beseech all to consider that often to observe the Lord's supper, is made our duty by the very same authority that instituted this sacred ordinance—that often to observe the Lord's Supper, is to preach often, and preach in the most effectual way to spectators, by significant signs and speaking action—the atoning cross of Jesus—“For, as *often* as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do *show* the Lord's death till he come.” Is Christ's death to be commemorated at all, and ought it not often to be commemorated? If the Lord's Supper is an appointed means of grace, must not its often observance, under the divine blessing, subdue our corruption, strengthen our graces, maintain and enlarge our fellowship with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and advance us in our meeting for heaven?

c. To no purpose do men argue, that if the Lord's Supper were

an observed, it would only render unbelievers and formalists
e hardened. I reply that the Lord's Supper is designed
for believers—penitents—those that love the Lord Jesus
sist: and at no time have unbelievers and formalists any
at to approach the Table of the Lord. Is it said that chris-
s would not be spiritually fit for coming more frequently to
table of the Lord than at present? I reply that thousands
o profess christianity, plead as an excuse for disobeying the
g command of Christ and not coming to his table at all,
they are not fit. We ought to be always fit—our unfitness
in—our unfitness is criminal; and, just as we should always
tain an habitual preparation for dying, we should always
tain an habitual preparation for approaching the Lord's
ble: to be fit for the one, is to be fit for the other. Be-
es, as Christ makes it our duty often to commemorate his
th, he is willing to make his grace sufficient for us: he is
ays ready in answer to prayer, to give us the supply of his
RIT, to quicken us for duty. Is it said that the often ob-
ance of the Lord's Supper, would increase men's spiritual
fference, by reason of frequency of familiarity? I answer it
ght do so with mere nominal christians, who have no right
he Lord's Table, but not with spiritual christians. With
ard to real believers, the reverse is the truth. In point of
s, and in accordance with the constitution of the soul, the
re that religious persons give themselves to any religious ex-
ise, the more heart, and life, and soul do they feel in it.
s so in prayer, meditation, searching the scriptures, atten-
ce on public worship—and it is so, it must be so with the
rd's Supper, an ordinance in the observance of which, all our
ces and all our religious exercises are called into combined
ion.

While we hold back from approaching the Lord's table as
have opportunity, what benefits—what sacred pleasures
we deny ourselves! How do we forsake our own mercies,
ile so much sin remains to be mortified, and our graces
ed so much to be revived and quickened—of what a powerful
ans of grace do we refuse to avail ourselves! When the
se of Christ is so low and languishing, how do we refuse to
mour his name and glory in his cross! with hearts panting
er happiness, how do we deny ourselves the purest enjoy-
ent on this side heaven!

After reading the following passage from "James's Church
embers Guide," what christian mind is there, that will not
ank the Lord Jesus for his table, and resolve not to forsake

it. "That sacramental seasons are commonly the most happy and most profitable which a believer spends under the means of grace, is a fact not to be denied. It is no wonder that it should be so. It is at the sacred supper that the attention is most powerfully arrested and fixed, and the heart impressed and affected. It is there that the scheme of redeeming mercy seems peculiarly to expand upon the understanding, and to excite the emotions of the bosom in a degree almost unknown elsewhere. It is there that the glory of the divine character has been most clearly discovered by our mind—there that Jesus has unfolded to us the wonders of his mediation—and there that the Eternal SPIRIT has descended into our souls in the most munificent communications of his sanctifying and consoling influence. How have our icy hearts there melted beneath the ardour of celestial love, and flowed down in streams of godly sorrow! How have our grovelling, earthly minds, soared on the wings of faith and hope, till we have lost sight of earthly scenes and sounds, amidst the glory of such as are divine. It is there that we have felt ourselves crucified with Christ and have risen with him into newness of life. It is there that brotherly love has glowed with its most perfect fervour, and the communion of saints has yielded its most precious delights. Happier hours than those which have been thus spent we never expect to know in this world; they have left a relish and a fragrance upon the mind; the remembrance of them is sweet, and the anticipation of their return is amongst our brightest hopes."

April 20, 1833.

CEPHAS.

SUMMER.

THE spring season, at first dreary and forbidding, but afterwards awakening joyous hope in the bosom of the husbandman, has now given place to an auspicious summer. The earth is once more robed in her emerald mantle. Warmer suns and refreshing showers, have fostered the fruits of the ground, and produced a more than ordinarily abundant vegetation. He who has promised that summer and winter shall not cease, is fulfilling his promise. He who has pledged his word, that seedtime and harvest shall continue, in regular succession, till the end of the world, has given the former, and encourages us, with humble confidence, to look for the latter.

God knows our wants, and God is kind." The changes of the whole "revolving year," infinite wisdom and goodness have rendered subservient to the benefit and happiness of man.—In winter, with his denuded branches, and wide barrenness, possesses advantages peculiar to himself, independently on preparing us for the enjoyment of opening spring, and returning summer. Well may we address our Heavenly Father in the language of the Psalmist.

So thou the year most lib'rally dost with thy goodness crown,
And all thy paths abundantly on us drop fatness down."

In summer, nature's landscape exhibits peculiar richness, variety, and variety. Look we to the grove or mead, the well cultivated field, or the pasture land with its almost spontaneous treasures,—all are full of richness. And what endless beauty and variety! "Behold" said our Saviour, "the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The mingled colours of trees, and herbs, and flowers, what a variety of combinations of loveliness! How admirably calculated to please the eye and to rejoice the heart of man!

In summer, the scenery of mountain and moor, of lake and sea, is usually interesting. These objects, amid the coldness and gloom of winter, are too deeply clothed in gloom, to excite the mind pleasurable emotion. We visit them not, or we visit them reluctantly, and of necessity. But when Summer once more beam upon the world, what object more beautiful than the *sun-lit* mountain raising his summit to the sky, bold and bold—and surrounded by fertile valleys, with all the varied forms of woodland beauty! There is here a mighty contrast, which throws its spell of enchantment around the contemplative mind, and causes man to feel what he "can ne'er express." Nor is the interest diminished by the extensive moor extending far in the distance, and skirting the blue horizon.

The magnificence of the scene receives fresh additions from the placid lake, reflecting in its limpid waters the foliage which crowns its banks, and cooling the sultry air which rests on its glassy surface. "Wood and water," in a thousand real or imaginary relations, enter largely into those scenes which we have been led to regard as most attractive, and with which we have the greatest number of pleasing associations. The bold headland, with its rocky precipices, surmounting the oak, or the waving pine, is perhaps sublime in itself; but

more than half the deep emotion of the beholder is derived from the "rolling billow," which washes its foundation. Inanimate nature itself seems to *live* in the radiance of the summer sun.

"The very dead creation, from his touch,
Assumes a mimic life. By him refin'd,
In brighter mazes the relucent stream
Plays o'er the mead. The precipice abrupt,
Projecting horror on the blackened flood,
Softens at his return. The desert joys
Wildly through all his melancholy bounds.
Rude ruins glitter; and the briny deep,
Seen from some pointed promontory's top,
Far to the blue horizon's utmost verge,
Restless, reflects a floating gleam."

In summer, nature teems with animal existence. How many forms of life start into activity and enjoyment—how many beings feast luxuriously at the free table which God has everywhere furnished! At this season, we witness a splendid illustration of the Sacred Penman's address to Jehovah—"Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." His creatures are innumerable, and innumerable are the blessings which he hath provided for them. From the tiny insect to the "noblest work of God," through orders of existence which imagination cannot conceive—all are indebted to the same liberal Benefactor—all are filled with goodness from Him who diffuses goodness throughout creation.

Shall we, then, allow our minds to dwell on the gorgeous beauty of summer's dress, the luxuriance of her fruits, and the delicate pencilling of her flowers, without directing one solitary aspiration of gratitude to the God of summer? Having these things richly to enjoy, shall man blind his understanding against the perception of the link connecting them with Deity, thus depriving his own soul of the purest and most elevated felicity, and denying to his God the tribute of grateful veneration?

"And yet were every faltering tongue of Man,
Almighty Father! silent in thy praise;
Thy works themselves would raise a general voice,
Ev'n in the depth of solitary woods,
By human foot untrod; proclaim thy power,
And to the choir celestial *Thee* resound,
Th' eternal cause, support, and end of all!"

Need we point to the calm summer evening, as a season

lightful and profitable meditation? The mind that is not torn by evil passions, but well regulated in its trains of thought, and susceptible of holy emotion, will feel the peaceful influence which is then spread all around. The christian, at such a season, when he looks to earth, or air, or sea—to the setting sun, or the gathering shades of night, will learn many useful lessons, whilst he contemplates the works of his Father in heaven. He may, perhaps, be led to reflect on the summers that are gone, and the friends who are gone with them—and, sensitive and sad, he may “love to embalm their memory with tears;” but as the sun that sets in gloom to-night shall rise in glory on the morrow, so believers who have gone down to the darkness of the tomb, shall awake to everlasting light and life. Can the christian entertain this hope concerning his departed friends? Then all is well. But he is also stimulated to duty for himself, that he may not be associated at last with those who utter the distressing complaint—“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!” This is the summer season, and it is the summer of life. Winter is coming—old age is approaching—death is, perhaps, at hand: has provision been made for its arrival?

“ But summer will return, in all her beauty dressed,
Nature shall rejoice again, and be by man caressed :
But ah ! life's summer past away,
Can never, never hope return,
Cold winter comes with cheerless ray
To beam upon the dreary urn.
Then, may I daily seek a mansion in the skies—
Where summers never cease, and glory never dies !”

D.

ON THE MORAL TENDENCIES OF A BELIEF IN THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION.

WE recently met with the following sensible remarks on a subject of acknowledged importance. They were furnished by a correspondent of the *Congregational Magazine*; and printed, as we are informed, immediately after the perusal of a sermon, by that eminent Anti-Trinitarian, Dr. Channing of America, whose views respecting the Trinity and Divinity of Christ have been so ably refuted by Professor Stuart of Amherst. As tending to explain the moral influence of the

doctrine of the Incarnation, and as tending to prove that the like all the other doctrines of the christian system, is a doctrine "according to godliness," we gladly give them a place in our pages.—EDIT.

THE doctrine that the divine nature assumed a human form, or, to use the emphatic language of inspiration, that "God was made manifest in the flesh," stands at the basis of all that is most important and peculiar in the views of Christianity without it, its most distinguishing features melt away, and the volume of revelation becomes little more than a clearer presentation of some of the more obvious truths of natural religion, and an improved edition of pagan morality. It is true, that the proper method of proving this doctrine is by appealing to the declarations of Scripture; and if, after a fair and legitimate interpretation, we find it there, we are bound, as long as we admit their divine authority, to receive it. Yet it is a doctrine so mysterious, that we can scarcely wonder that it has met with the most strenuous opposition from self sufficient reason and a false philosophy. Unable, however, to rest their objections on Scripture evidence, which it has tasked all their ingenuity to explain away, the opponents of this doctrine are fond of insisting on its "apparent absurdity"—its repugnance to human reason; and, of late especially, of questioning the moral tendencies of a belief in it, representing it as not only inconsistent with the decisions of an enlightened judgment, but hostile to the promotion of an elevated and ardent piety. It is represented by one of the most celebrated champions of Unitarianism of the present day, as a relapse "into the rudest mythology of the most idolatrous ages." Let us briefly canvass this assertion.

It is often objected, that a belief in this doctrine induces views derogatory to the glory of God. "What!" it is asked "are we to degrade our conceptions of a being of such infinite majesty and glory, and believe that he actually allied himself with a material form?" But surely this objection results from perverted views of that which forms the medium of the manifestation—that is, a *material* form. We conceive that nothing would form an insuperable barrier to God's employing *any* mode of manifestation for purposes worthy of him, except a moral obstacle; and who will say that this accompanies a belief in the doctrine of the incarnation? If there be nothing degrading to the *moral* glory of God in the *mode* of manifestation; if, as in the character of Christ, there

ing inconsistent with God's purity and holiness, what is so derogatory to the majesty and glory of God, in the fact of his affording this display of his perfections, through a material vehicle? What is there so revolting in the supposition, that he who has lavished upon matter all his creative skill and power—who has formed out of it, in the scenes of the external universe, a mirror to reflect his eternal power and Godhead? and above all, who has honoured it, by associating with it the pure and immortal principle of mind?—what, I say, so revolting in the supposition, that he who has employed and so honoured matter, should, for purposes of his love and benevolence, have assumed to himself that which is the master-piece of his divine skill, and condescended to become Immanuel—"God with us?"

Let us, at, to enter more directly on our subject,—the *moral* pursuit; the doctrine of the incarnation subserves, and the elevating and powerful influence it is calculated to exert on the human mind. In the first place, it gives us, what must be at the bottom of all true religion, a far more clear, familiar, and legible transcript of the divine character and perfections, than is afforded by any other system. Religion, we all admit, has God for its object; religion, we all admit, is to exert a practical influence; that would appear, therefore, the best system of religion which at once gives us the clearest views of the Divine Being, presents those views in a manner most likely to impress the heart; and attaches advantages which we believe attach only to the doctrine of the incarnation. The lifeless contemplation, or, at best, heartless mentalism of deists and philosophers; all attest that their abstracted views of Deity have but little power to impress the mind, and prove that devotion and religion are not mere abstractions. I do not think it would be very difficult to prove, from the very constitution of our nature, from the tenacity with which we cling to material objects, and from the very slight moral effect of abstract and speculative notions, however true, that for all impressive views of the divine character, we must have something more than a mere catalogue of the divine perfections; a more definite, palpable, and embodied representation of him.

It is evident is this, that every religion where the true one has been unknown, has assumed the *form of idolatry*; so invariable is human nature in general of entertaining those cold abstractions, and vague unimpressive views of the Divine Being, which are the boast of the Deist and the Unitarian. Now it is precisely in this point of view, that the transcendent glory

and peculiar excellence of the doctrine of the incarnation seen. It is exactly suited to the circumstances of man. The views it presents of God are far removed from the impalpable abstractions of Deism, and the degrading representations of idolatry. It at once adapts itself to that frailty of our nature which demands something more than metaphysical ideas of God, while the perfections thus embodied are so sublime, so grand, so worthy of the Godhead, that Deity is not degraded by the association. In this incarnate form of Deity we see an affecting accommodation to the infirmities of man, and nothing derogatory to the glory of God; in this incarnate form of Deity the refined and elevated mind may see, (only in more legible characters than he can ever see elsewhere,) the perfections and those glories which hitherto formed only cold subjects of his abstract musing; while the ignorant and degraded beings, including by far the greater part of our species who have never been taught to rise to these abstract contemplations, can here read, in this condescending and familiar exhibition of God, the outline of the divine lineaments; by the material and embodied form, they are enabled to arrive at ennobling views of the Divine Being himself; they now find a mystic book of the divine perfections translated into a language which even they can understand, and for the first time, "behold the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

And it is to be observed, that this manifestation of God not only affords us a clearer and more familiar knowledge of the divine character in general, but especially of those moral perfections, which are principally exercised in reference to man's redemption, and concerning which the world of nature is either totally silent, or affords us but faint and imperfect traces of them.

But secondly. The incarnation not only presents to the mind of man, a far clearer, more familiar, more intelligible transcript of the divine perfections, suited to the capacities and condition of all mankind, but the *manner* in which these perfections are represented in the Christian doctrine of the incarnation, exerts the most overwhelming influence over man's confidence and love. It awakens his fullest confidence. Without the doctrine of the incarnation, the incomprehensible mystery of the divine character, and the unsoftened austerities of the divine attributes only appal and terrify man, especially when conscious guilt assures him that these attributes are justly his enemies, and compels him to feel as an outcast from the Div

nce. But confidence must be restored, and man must
back as a child to a father; and how can this be so com-
y effected, as when man, who dared not lift his guilty eyes
aven, finds, in the doctrine of the incarnation, heaven itself
ing down to earth?—When the child of clay is oppressed
the idea of the divine majesty and glory, and absolutely
in the thought of divine infinitude, and when this awe is
ned into terror as he recollects that his guilt has set this
c being in array against himself, what can change this awe
ove; what can chase these terrors away, so well as the
lar exhibition of the divine character, “as God in Christ,
ciling the world unto himself?” It is true, we see the
e being, but it is in such a familiar garb that we feel no
s; we see the splendours of godhead, but their full blaze
shaded and attempered, that they do not dazzle us; we
d “*the brightness of the Father’s glory*,” but it comes
through the darkening veil of the Redeemer’s humanity,
lood of such soft and mellowed radiance, that it does not
ower us, and here for the first time we “*behold God and*

nd surely it is almost unnecessary to add, that the doctrine
e incarnation, when properly received, must exert an ab-
g influence upon that which is the very key-note of
moral harmony—the love of God. Let our opponents
hat they will of the moral tendency of the doctrine, we
onfident that we here stand on sure ground. Let the
ole and devout Christian fill his heart with the thoughts of
ncarnation, and believe that the High and Lofty One has
condescended, and he is filled with motives to love God
o obey him, of which nothing else either in heaven or earth
fford us any conception.

ANNIVERSARY MEETINGS OF RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES IN BRITAIN.

WE have felt ourselves refreshed in spirit, by reading
published accounts of the late anniversary meetings of reli-
s societies in London. We have been led to “thank
and take courage.” Anxious that our readers should
e in our joy—that they should experimentally know that
“joy of the Lord is their strength,” and thus be encour-
to renewed exertion in the “work of the Lord,” we
endeavoured to prepare from authentic sources, a brief but

comprehensive view of some of our leading religious institutions.

We begin with that noble institution, which, because of moral dignity of its object—the catholicity of its spirit, the magnitude of its operations, unquestionably claims the precedence—

THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

This important and influential Society—whose avowed object is, the translation of the scriptures into every language and their circulation through every land—held its Twentieth Anniversary in London, on Wednesday, the 1st of May. In the unavoidable absence of its noble and venerable President, Lord Teignmouth, the chair was ably filled by Mr. Bexley. One of the Secretaries read an interesting and encouraging Report. From this document it appeared that during the past year, 536,841 Bibles and Testaments had been circulated, making in all, from the commencement of the Society, 8,145,456 copies of the Word of Life! The income of the Society during the past year was £75,492 10s. 5d., of which £25,604 was received as free contributions, and £40,717 from the sale of Bibles and Testaments. This Society has been purified by trials. A delightful spirit of harmony has pervaded its recent anniversary, which we regard as a “token for good.” The tidings from France were peculiarly encouraging; during the past year, 70,000 copies of the Scriptures have been circulated, and 200 R. Catholic Schools have applied for Bibles. The speech of the Rev. Dr. Cox, of New York, contains many points of beauty and interest, and was well fitted to sustain the character as the chosen representative of American Christianity. May this noble institution pursue its mighty plan, until the inhabitants of every land shall have an opportunity of reading “in their own tongue, the wonderful works of God!”

LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The object of this great institution is, to send the Gospel of Christ to all the destitute nations of the earth; and such is the comprehensiveness of its fundamental principle, that it admits of the co-operation of “all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.” The Thirty-ninth Anniversary was held in London on the 9th of May—the Treasurer, T. Wilson, Esq., in the chair. The Rev. W. Ellis, the well known missionary to the South Sea Islands, read a most encouraging Annual Report. From this document, it appears that the operations of the Society are very extensive. The following sketch may be interesting:

Stations.	Missionaries.	Native Teach. &c.	
South Seas.....	33	14	41
Beyond the Ganges.....	5	7	3
East Indies.....	142	32	113
Russia.....	4	4	0
Mediterranean.....	2	2	0
South Africa.....	25	25	13
Madagascar and Mauritius	3	5	93
British Guiana.....	6	4	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	220	93	264

making, with upwards of 400 schoolmasters, assistants, teachers, &c., between 5 and 600 persons, more or less dependent on the Society, exclusive of families. The number of churches is 54, and that of native communicants (converted heathens) 4,557—of schools, the number is 448, and of scholars, 27,257. The number of printing establishments is from 9 of which have been printed 250,050 books, including 37,500 portions of Scripture—and from 11 stations, 237 copies of books have been circulated during the year. The subscriptions for the year amounted to nearly £40,000.—This institution also pursue its course until the gospel be preached to every creature!

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

This is a voluntary Society which originated with, and is managed by certain ministers and friends of the Episcopal Established Church. Its operations are extensive—its agents evangelical, and its efforts have been greatly blessed. The 11th Anniversary was held in London on April 30th, Sir R. Inglis in the chair. The income of the Society for the year was about £48,000. The students in the Mission College are 13—the missionaries and catechists sent out during the year were 9; and the whole number of missionaries and catechists in connexion with the Society is 110. The Report noticed the safe arrival of Dr. Wilson, the faithful and devoted Bishop of Calcutta, whose counsel and exertions will be of essential service to this valuable Society. May its labours be crowned with eminent success!

CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION SOCIETY.

The object of this valuable Society is, to promote the spiritual instruction of the neglected poor, by means of domiciliary visits—the establishment of meetings for religious exercises—the circulation of the scriptures, and of the writings of ap-

proved christian authors. Its *unpaid* agents, and all are gratuitous, are the office-bearers and members of christian churches. The eighth Annual Meeting was held in Finsbury Chapel, London, on the 30th of April,—Lord Henly in the chair. The Report announced, that in London alone, there are 6 associations; 1297 gratuitous visitors, and 32,452 families under a regular system of christian visitation. By the labour of the visitors 89 weekly prayer meetings have been established, and 100,000 loan tracts put into circulation; 568 copies of the Holy Scriptures have been distributed; 1603 poor children have been introduced into sunday or day schools, and 2,335 cases of distress have been relieved during the year. 6,000 persons at least, attend every Lord's Day at the prayer meetings and preaching stations. More than 100 towns and villages have established associations on the same plan. During the past year a small associate has been formed in Belfast. We speak from personal knowledge, when we recommend it as a plan peculiarly fitted to benefit the neglected poor. We intend shortly to direct the attention of our readers to the peculiar excellence of this "labour of love."

CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

This is an association of the Independent or Congregational Churches of England and Wales. Similar associations exist in Scotland and Ireland, and also in the United States of America. They are intended to promote christian intercourse, and extend the cause of the gospel in connexion with the Congregational System. The annual meeting of the English Union was held in the Congregational Library, London, on the 7th of May. Rev. J. Gilbert, in the chair. Several resolutions of importance were unanimously passed. The meeting resolved to recommend to all churches of the Congregational order the importance of adopting vigorous, but constitutional and scriptural measures for the speedy removal of those many grievances under which they, in common with other dissenting bodies, still labour. The meeting was eloquently addressed by the Rev. Dr. Coe of New York—a distinguished Minister of the Presbyterian Church in America. A very interesting letter was also read from the Rev. Dr. Ely, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, inviting the Congregational Union to send delegates to the Annual Meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. In consequence of this letter, the meeting passed the following resolution—"That this meeting cannot receive from the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America such

cial expressions of regard as those contained in the excellent
 of the Rev. Dr. Ezra Stiles Ely, their Stated Clerk,
 about the most sincere reciprocations; and, sensible of the
 advantages to be mutually derived from the purposed in-
 change of delegates, recommend to the Committee to make
 requisite arrangements for endeavouring to procure two or
 three brethren to proceed to America in the spring of 1834,
 as to be present at the Meeting of the General Assembly
 at Philadelphia; and also at such meetings of the Congrega-
 tional body in New England as they may be able to visit; and
 to collect and communicate such information as will be mutually
 interesting respecting the state of religion in both countries.”
 Our limits will not permit us at present to pursue our plan of
 detailing the operations of religious societies. We may resume
 again. Who can reflect on the varied and extensive operations
 of such valuable institutions, and yield to a spirit of morbid despon-
 dency? Who will refuse to join us in expressing our thank-
 ness to God for the wonders he has done? C.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST, AND THE PLAN OF SALVATION.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN.]

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”
 IT is a glorious truth, that Christ is exalted upon high a-
 s a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and for-
 giveness of sins; and as the Divine Being has commanded *all*
 men, every where, to repent, we may justly conclude, that all
 men *ought* to repent; for if repentance is not a *duty*,
 repentance is no *sin*. Repentance generally signifies a change
 of mind, which is produced (instrumentally) by serious reflec-
 tion, and retarded by inconsideration. Repentance toward God,
 and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, is the doctrine of the New
 Testament; and to feel a degree of the *bitterness of sin*, before
 we experience the *preciousness of Christ*, is in accordance
 with the general operations of the Holy Ghost. We must
 be convinced of our *danger*, before we shall see our need of a
deliverer—we must have a knowledge of our *disease*, before
 we shall think of applying to a *physician*—we must be cut
 off from *self dependance*, before we shall be brought to depend
 on Jesus. Therefore, by repentance we are brought to feel our
 need of Christ, and by faith we are enabled to lay hold on

Christ. Let the impenitent sinner then, call in his thoughts and solemnly enquire—*Whence* am I?—*what* am I?—*where* am I?—where will my present conduct lead me? Let him pause over these inquiries, until the promised Spirit direct his weeping eyes to the bleeding cross; then shall he look on him, whom he has pierced by his numerous transgressions, and mourn for offending his God. Such a penitential sorrow, (in some degree) created in every new-born soul, prior to his receiving the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of sins.

The plan of salvation in point of simplicity, far surpasses commonest conceptions; we should therefore avoid rendering it *hard to be understood*, which the Supreme Being has graciously made so *inconceivably easy*. The vicarious sacrifice of the Saviour has opened a divine channel, in which every blessing we need, can freely flow from the throne of God into the soul of man. Now it is, that Jehovah can be just, and the justifier of the ungodly—now it is, that Jesus is able to save unto the uttermost, all them that come unto God by him—now it is that the Holy Ghost quickens those who were before dead in trespasses and sins. Thus through CHRIST we have access, by one SPIRIT unto the FATHER, to whom we approach in *prayer by faith*, and obtain *mercy*.

Having advanced those remarks, it is necessary to enquire—“What are **YOUR** views and feelings, reader?” Are you weary of wandering from God, and willing to return? Do you feel a burden of guilt upon your conscience, which you desire the removal of? Is the language of your heart—*What must I do to be saved?* If so, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy. Tidings worthy of angelic proclamation—tidings suited to your present condition—tidings that have cheered many a drooping heart, and will cheer yours in proportion as you believe them. The volume of inspiration divinely assures us, that this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Sin is the transgression of the law; and as all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, so the state and character of all men by nature is that of **SINNERS**—guilty, polluted, miserable sinners—unfit for heaven, and deserving of hell. But is there no pitifulness, no hope—nothing *done* for sinners? Must they for ever perish without mercy? Ah, no! Be amazed, O heaven! and be astonished, O earth! Christ Jesus came into the world to **SAVE** sinners!—to save them from the guilt and defilement of sin, by the purchase of his blood, and the power of his grace—to save them with a free, full, and present salvation, through

in the merits of our glorious Mediator—to save them from the bitter pangs of endless death, and raise them to the joys of eternal life. Blessed news!—and is it really true? It is a faithful saying—the saying of Him who cannot lie—the saying of him who put away sin by the sacrifice of himself—the saying of him who died (the just for the unjust) to redeem us to God. It is therefore a saying of the greatest importance, and consequently *worthy of all acceptation*. These, my friends, are the good tidings sent from heaven to sinners and the angels of sinners. Are you then a sinner? The word of God tells you *are*. Do you *know* it—can you *feel* it? If so, my friends, for your redemption draweth nigh; for, be it known to you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the *forgiveness* of sins. THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS! O what a blessing!—But for *whom*? For *you*, for *all* that believe! For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Glorious and wonderful mystery! O, let us give our joy a tongue, and with one voice exclaim, “Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!” It was in Christ Jesus reconciling the world unto himself, imputing their trespasses; so that all who die in their sins through unbelief, while all who are saved are justified by faith, and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Awake thou that sleepest, and behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. His arms are open to receive you as returning prodigals, and the soul-winning language of his lips is, “Come unto me all ye that are weary and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” O ye sinner, seriously consider these things. Think of the infinite value of your precious immortal souls—think of the precious blood which was shed to purchase them—think of the fearful consequence of neglecting so great salvation. Do not reject the sweet overtures of divine mercy, but *believe* and *be saved*. Do not excuse yourself by saying you *cannot* believe; if you have not the *power*, you have the *means*, and the *power* to *use* those means. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” This word is faithfully proclaimed among you, and you are affectionately invited to believe it. Hear, and your souls shall live; the Word is nigh. If thou wilt *confess with thy mouth* the Lord Jesus, and *believe in thine heart* that God hath raised Him up from the dead, *thou shalt be saved*. Come, then, to Jesus *just as you are*. Do not, we beseech you, attempt to make yourself *better*

before you come. Leave that *solely* to Christ, who justifies the UNGODLY. Do not, we *again* beseech you, look for a *previous preparation* in yourselves. Do not imagine that you must be more holy, humble, or contrite, before Christ will receive you—for *this* man receiveth SINNERS, and sinners *alone*. "Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life FREELY." "*Men and brethren, to you is the word of this salvation sent.*"

Belfast, June, 1833.

R. MASON.

THE AMERICAN CHURCHES—No. III.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

THE United States of America having been chiefly colonized by Nonconformists, who fled from persecution, Episcopalians whose system was the law establishment of Britain, were not numerous as other settlers. Looking on America, however, as a land of promise, many emigrated thither. Episcopal Churches were formed chiefly in Virginia, New-York, Maryland: and in these states they were constituted the law establishment by the English power.

Virginia is the most ancient settlement in North America. After various unsuccessful attempts, a colony was founded in 1608 by English emigrants, who suffered great hardships from famine and from the Indians. The first settlers were zealous Episcopalians, and they treated the dissenters with the same intolerance which they had witnessed in England. This cannot be justly considered as a reproach on the Episcopalians of the present day, as intolerance was the religious epidemic of that age; and all parties when in power seemed actuated by the same persecuting spirit, from which they suffered in turn, which they failed not to condemn as Anti-Christian in others. It was so in England; and even the Puritans of New England, who fled from persecution in Britain, departed so far from themselves, as to punish the Quakers with flogging, banishment, and death. Although in Virginia, no capital punishments were inflicted on the Quakers, as had been done in New England, statutes were enacted, making it penal for any ship-master to bring a Quaker into the State, and prohibiting the observance of any religion but that of the Church of England. For nearly a century the Episcopalians retained this intolerant spirit, but while exclusion prevailed, religion was far from flourishing. After the year 1700 other sentiments were gradually brought in by the influx of emigration, and various dissenting congregations

ns were formed. During the reign of intolerance and compulsion, the indolence of the clergy had become so excessive, that multitudes joined the dissenters, and by the middle of the century, nearly two-thirds of the people, in spite of the severities of persecuting laws, had revolted from the establishment.

The state of New York was first colonized by the Dutch in 1614. After various wars it was surrendered to the English in 1664. English Episcopalians, as well as other denominations, soon began to settle, and form congregations. At length English power established Episcopacy. Colonel Fletcher, who was Governor in 1693, projected the scheme of a general tax, for the exclusive building of Episcopal Churches, the exclusive support of Episcopal Ministers, and artfully effected his design in part. This unjust and impolitic measure was the cause of a "religious war" between the Episcopalians and Presbyterians, which was maintained with great animosity on both sides, till British tyranny, state intolerance, and sectarian exclusion, were effectually swamped by the American Revolution. Several succeeding Governors, especially Lord Cornbury, exerted all their influence to establish Episcopacy, and inflicted severities on the Presbyterians, similar to those which had been endured in Ulster and in Scotland.

Maryland was at its formation, about 1637, a Roman Catholic settlement. In 1692, Governor Cople proceeded to divide the colony into thirty parishes, to sixteen of which he appointed episcopalian ministers from England. Episcopalians became in time the most powerful body, and enjoyed a kind of law establishment.

New Jersey was surrendered in 1665, by the Dutch to the English. The Duke of York, afterwards the notorious James II. to whom Charles II. granted this State as well as New-York, encouraged both Roman Catholics and Protestants to become settlers. The Duke held out great advantages to Episcopalians to emigrate from England, and seemed desirous of rendering that religion general throughout the State. The greater part of the settlers, however, adhered to other denominations.

Carolina began to be settled in 1622. To encourage emigration, an act was passed by the legislature of the Colony in 1669, ordering, "That Dissenters should not *there be obliged* to approve or submit to the government or worship of the Church of England." A constitution, and a body of laws, were framed for this colony by the famous John Locke. Full freedom of conscience was guaranteed to all denominations of

Protestants, without liability to pains and penalties on account of religion. This constitution, however, was soon violated. In 1703, the English Governor and his council enacted, "That none should be admitted into office without taking the sacramental test, and conforming to the English Church." By a majority of votes in the council, episcopacy was constituted the law establishment. These proceedings threw the colony into the utmost confusion and dismay. Petitions were poured into England against these absurd and perfidious acts; and they were annulled by the English Parliament, as contrary to the original law and constitution of the colony.

Impatient of foreign oppression, America appealed to arms and achieved her independence. Dissenters ceased to exist because no sect was set up by government to the depression of others. Favouritism was at an end, and Episcopacy found herself like Presbytery, Independency, Methodism, &c., obliged to depend on her own resources. A stranger to the hardihood that springs from unaided self-exertion, and trained to lean for support on English power, when that fell, the Episcopal Church felt both her own weakness and the inconveniencies of her position with double keenness. Hitherto she had no episcopal bishop but the bishop of London; and now that his jurisdiction was at an end, the American Church, according to episcopal principles, was left in a state of disorganization. To repair what they deemed a vital defect, the clergy of Connecticut elected Dr. Samuel Seabury, and sent him over to England, entreating the English prelates to pity their desolate state, and consecrate him to be their bishop. There being no Act of Parliament providing for the consecration of bishops beyond the limits of his Majesty's dominions, the prelates felt themselves embarrassed with the novelty of the case. After long delay, and seeing no immediate prospect of success, Dr. Seabury next applied to the prelates of the Episcopal Church in Scotland. They at first hesitated, but at length consented, and he was "consecrated" at Aberdeen, on the 14th Nov., 1784.

In 1786, an Act of the British Parliament was passed, "*empowering* the Archbishop of Canterbury or York to consecrate to the office of bishop persons not of his Majesty's dominions;" and in 1787, Drs. White and Provost were constituted Bishops, the former elected for Philadelphia, the latter for New York. Since that period, the Episcopal Church in America, has been constantly on the increase, and has enjoyed an uninterrupted course of external prosperity. Like every other church in America, she has no state establishment, and

it may seem incredible in this country, like the Presbyterian and other Churches, she is opposed to it. The following is the authority. Dr. Hobart, Bishop of the Episcopal Church of New York, visited England in 1824, and, on his return, delivered a sermon, &c. comparing his own church with the Church of England. In this discourse he says,—“We want therefore, the wealth, the honours, or the establishment of the Church of England. With this union of church and state commenced the great corruptions of Christianity; and so firmly persuaded am I of the deleterious effects of this union, that, if I must choose the one or the other, I would take the persecutions of the state rather than her favour—her frowns rather than her embraces. It is the eminent privilege of our church, so evangelical in her doctrines and her worship, she stands as the primitive church did, before the first Christian Emperor loaded her with the honours, that proved more injurious to her than the relentless persecutions of his imperial predecessors. In this enviable land of religious freedom, our church in comparison with every other religious denomination, asks nothing of the state, but that which she does not fear will ever be denied her—protection—equal and impartial protection.” Having reprobated as shocking, the trade of church livings in the Church of England, Bishop Hobart says,—“I need not observe how superior in all these respects, are the arrangements doubtless not without their inconveniencies, for no human system is perfect) of our church. To the congregations is secured the appointment of their clergy, under regulations that prevent the choice of heretical or unworthy persons, and their support from their voluntary contributions. The connexion is not one of choice, and therefore of confidence and affection. And happy are the effects in the general zeal and purity, and exemplary lives of the clergy, and the affectionate intercourse that subsists between them and their flocks. Often have I taken pride and pleasure in exciting the astonishment of those who supposed and contended that the voluntary act of the people would not adequately provide for the clergy, by stating, in my own case, the continuance of my salary, the provision for my parochial duty, and the ample funds by which I was enabled to leave my congregation and diocese.”

In 1830, the Episcopal Church had 15 dioceses, 10 diocesan bishops, and 528 ministers, with congregations greatly more numerous. Since that time there must have been a considerable increase of congregations and pastors.

As to doctrine, this church adopts the Thirty-nine Ar-

ticles, but omits the Athanasian creed. The English prayer book is adopted, with the omission of such passages as are commonly objected to by Dissenters and Episcopalians themselves in this country. Arminianism is said to prevail among a large number of the clergy: others, however, entertain Calvinistic sentiments.

As to government, there are but three orders, I believe, in this church—bishops, presbyters, and deacons. There are no archbishops. Affairs have been conducted since 1789 by a “General Convention,” consisting of an upper and lower house. The former consists of bishops, and the latter of clerical and *lay* deputies from each diocese. It meets once in three years, on the third Tuesday of May. There are also annual diocesan conventions, composed of the clergy and lay delegates from each congregation. The bishops are elected by a majority of the Presbyters in their respective dioceses.

The appointment of ministers depends entirely on the people. In some congregations, the vestry—in others, the people at large choose the minister. The bishops have neither patronage, pensions, nor palaces. They are working men; and are supported, as other ministers, by the people among whom they officiate. In some states, however, a fund is raised enabling the bishop to devote himself to the general superintendence of the clergy and the churches.

The Methodists having to the amount of 2,000 travelling preachers, “form,” says Watson, in his Theological Dictionary, “an Episcopal Church, but are founded on the principle, that bishops and presbyters are of the *same* order, although the oversight of presbyters may be committed to those who, in virtue of that office, are called bishops.”

In America, the different denominations, without compromising their principles, live in harmony and love. The Presbyterian does not “envy” Episcopalian, nor Episcopalian “vex” Presbyterian. The odious terms of “Dissenterism,” “sectaries,” &c. with which men pelt each other here, are there unknown. There they are strangers to the grievance of the tithing system. However much their churches may differ, neither Presbyterians, Episcopalians nor Congregationalists, neither Methodists nor Baptists, neither Calvinists nor Arminians are in danger of being maligned as Atheists, or falsely accused of leaguings with radicals and infidels against what are called ancient and venerated institutions, as certain evangelical dissenters in England and Scotland are, because they complain that they are forced by law to support Popish, Prelatical, or Erastian systems.

they know to be at variance with the word of God. I leave to add, moreover, that these false accusations come from a doubly bad grace from men who join in church communion in the administration of Baptism or the Lord's Supper, radicals, liberals, Arians, &c.

God seems to be saying by the present aspect of European affairs—"Behold! I shake the heavens and the earth." Do not the heavens and the earth—the political and ecclesiastical systems of the nations *shake*? The changes, however, though which they must pass before they are "made new," known and controlled by Him who subordinates all events, all human passions, to the inbringing of his spiritual kingdom, and of whom it is said respecting *his* church in the earth, "Highest himself shall establish her."

BEDE.

HOME MISSIONS.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN.]

It is much to be regretted that the Home Missions, conducted by Presbyterians of the North of Ireland, have been hitherto so confined to the purpose of merely erecting congregations, and engaging ministers permanently settled over them. No doubt this would be an ultimate object, but the giving to it such importance and prominence, as has hitherto been done, has tended very considerably to defeat Home Missionary labours.

A minister commences in an extensive and neglected field, and he has many to attend on his preaching:—he continues to labour for a season, and finding a number well satisfied with his doctrine, and coming in regular attendance on public worship, he reports to the committee of management that he has made the commencement of a flourishing congregation. Immediate steps are taken for a permanent settlement, the note of preparation for a new meeting-house is everywhere heard; and that which, at first, seemed to be the simple preaching of the gospel, all at once presents itself as the aggrandisement of a sect. The whole face of affairs now changes. Other sects, formerly favourable, are alarmed for their honor and their interest; a zealous zeal is awakened among preachers, who, but a little ago, were torpid as any of the seven sleepers—all the pride of family connection and of old establishments is up, lest the new party should gain strength; and what, perhaps, is as bad as all the rest put together, there is only a premature call upon individuals, to make the great sacrifice of connecting themselves permanently with the *new* congregation and party, but a most repulsive alarm to their self-interest is sounded in the preparations for the heavily expensive work of building a new meeting-house.

By such injudicious haste, and I might almost say, by substituting the interests of a sect for the interests of Christ, very serious injury has been done in times past to the cause of Home Missions. Might

there not be much improvement on the system? Why set the mere establishment of a congregation in the fore front of the plan? It is inconsistent with the first principles of christianity, and the very nature of a christian congregation. Before you can have a christian congregation, you must have christian converts. If you collect together a number of people (the worst are generally most ready for any thing new,) whatever be their character, and put into their hands the choice of a minister of the gospel, and elect out of their number officers for the management of spiritual affairs, who are themselves ignorant of spiritual affairs, you may then, no doubt add to the numbers, and to what some esteem the respectability of a body, but you have disgraced christianity, and inflicted a curse instead of conferring a blessing. To say that a christian congregation has been formed where there are not believers in the doctrines, and followers of the example of Christ, is to talk both absurdly and impiously. But for ascertaining the characters of professed converts, time and close observation are required; and therefore any religious body, or any minister acts most improperly in admitting to the privilege of the christian church, or to offices in the christian church, individuals with whom they are very partially acquainted.

Apart, however, from such high considerations, common prudence should teach religious bodies not to make their own enlargement a prominent theme in the mouths of their missionaries, nor the erection of regular organized congregations a primary part of their labours.

Let the preaching missionary go forth, accompanied or preceded by the scripture reader; let them bring before the people Christ crucified in plainness and simplicity; let them go from house to house, determined to know nothing among the people but Christ and him crucified; let them follow up the public preaching of the gospel, by meetings for religious conversation and prayer; let them engage those whom they find serious, or whom they make serious, to hold meetings among themselves for reading the scriptures, conversation and prayer; let them visit such meetings as they can make it convenient in their different routes throughout the country; let them do their utmost, by mutual good offices and friendly christian intercourse, to bind the hearts of the serious together; and as they find the spirit of christianity growing among such, let them afford opportunities for learning christian benevolence, and evincing what value they attach to the gospel by contributing to its support. By such a system, the great one object of christian missions will be kept steadily in view, the little leaven will be allowed quietly and without unnecessary opposition to leaven the whole lump; men will be attached to the truth, before they are called on to contribute to its support; opportunities will be furnished of becoming acquainted with the character of those applying for christian privileges, and they, being acquainted with each other, and united by the most tender ties, will act together in harmony, and support and cheer each other in any difficulties, or even persecution, to which they may be subjected for the sake of the truth.

First, therefore, make christians, and then collect them into christian congregations.